

Remarks

Claims 1-23 are pending in the application, and stand rejected.

IDS

An IDS was filed on December 23, 2005, but an initialed copy of the form 1449 was not returned with the present Office Action. An initialed copy of the form 1449 is respectfully requested.

Claim rejections

Section 102(b)

Claims 1-23 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Tegethoff (US 5,539,652). The Applicant respectfully traverses, for at least the reason that Tegethoff does not disclose "performing accelerated stress testing on a product to a point of product failure to collect accelerated stress testing data, the accelerated stress testing data representing the response of the product operating in a first environment," as recited in claim 1. Moreover, Tegethoff does not disclose "calculating the mean-time-between-failures for the product operating in a second environment based on the accelerated stress testing data" as further recited in claim 1.

Additionally, Tegethoff does not disclose the features recited in independent claim 22. For example, Tegethoff does not disclose "performing accelerated stress testing on a product to collect accelerated stress testing data for the product ... re-designing the product; performing accelerated stress testing on the re-designed product to collect re-design accelerated stress testing data for the re-designed product ... and based on the mean-time-between-failures for the product and the mean-time-between-failures for the re-designed product, calculating a proportion change in product life resulting from the re-design," as recited in claim 22.

Tegethoff relates to test simulation in electronic circuit design; *only simulation* is disclosed in Tegethoff. Specifically, Tegethoff relates to a software simulation tool called MTSIM (multi-chip module manufacturing test simulator). The MTSIM tool "applies ... pre-determined test and quality information to [a] supplied description of [an] electronic circuit design to simulate [a] manufacturing test process and thereby

estimate ... manufacturing test and quality attributes." Please see col. 7, lines 27-31. Tegethoff further goes on to state:

"The simulator of the present invention operates in cooperation with computer aided electronic design tools to predict behavior of an electronic circuit design based on software models of the key components of the product being modeled. Simulation output is based on the circuit board topology (the layout of the board and the components used), the testability attributes of the circuit board, models of the manufacturing process, and models of the test process."

Please see col. 10, lines 16-23. Thus, as noted, Tegethoff only discloses simulation of a circuit design using software models. Nowhere does Tegethoff disclose performing accelerated stress testing on a product to collect accelerated stress testing data, as recited in claims 1 and 22. As disclosed in the present specification at, for example, page 6, lines 16-21, the accelerated stress testing may include such things as multiple axis vibrational tests, rapid temperature transitions, high/low temperature limits, voltage margining and the like, applied to a product to determine its stress limits.

The Examiner cites Tegethoff at col. 6, line 59 to col. 7, line 9, col. 10, lines 16-33, col. 27, line 55 to col. 29, line 5, and col. 40 as disclosing the noted feature. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Col. 6, line 59 to col. 7, line 9 describe MTSIM and thus relate to a software tool used purely for simulation. Col. 10, lines 16-33 disclose more details of MTSIM. Col. 27, line 55 to col. 29, line 5 describe reliability models used in simulation. Col. 40 relates to various software flags. Again, none of the cited material discloses accelerated stress testing. Accordingly, as noted earlier, Tegethoff further fails to disclose calculating the mean-time-between-failures for a product operating in a second environment based on accelerated stress testing data, as recited in claim 1. Also in view of the foregoing and as noted earlier, Tegethoff is silent with regard to performing accelerated stress testing on a re-designed product, and based on a mean-time-between-failures for the product and a mean-time-between-failures for the re-designed product, calculating a proportion change in product life resulting from the re-design, as recited in claim 22.

Claims 1 and 22 are therefore allowable over Tegethoff, as are claims 2-21 and 23 for at least the reason that they depend on one of claims 1 or 22. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-23 is therefore respectfully requested.

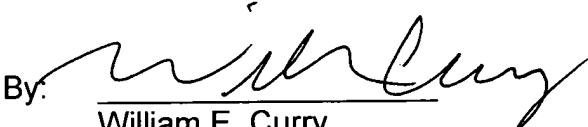
Conclusion

In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4323 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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